

Message

From: Thurmon, Clarke [Thurmon.Clarke@epa.gov]
Sent: 6/4/2020 9:08:56 PM
To: Contreras, Peter [Contreras.Peter@epa.gov]; King, Carol [King.Carol@epa.gov]; Martinson, Mathew [martinson.mathew@epa.gov]; Kenknight, Jeff [Kenknight.Jeff@epa.gov]; Steiner-Riley, Cara [Steiner-Riley.Cara@epa.gov]
CC: Rausch, Heidi [Rausch.Heidi@epa.gov]; Wilson, Dane [Wilson.Dane@epa.gov]; Wehling, Carrie [Wehling.Carrie@epa.gov]; Parikh, Pooja [Parikh.Pooja@epa.gov]
Subject: RE: Lower Umatilla Basin - Petition for SDWA 1431 (nitrates in groundwater)

All:

Mat and Jeff – I thought you both did a great job presenting the information and the intention of the letter.

I will also say that I am currently concerned at the position taken by the political appointees (David Ross, Anna W, and Susan B.) on the call today regarding this issue and the long-standing and on-going threat to public health raised by the Petitioner, made clear by the state of Oregon's data, and, upon review of the state's data, substantiated by our regional team. The conclusion, as I understand it at this point, is there is a very high likelihood that potentially thousands of people in the LUB have been and are currently drinking and being exposed to water contaminated with nitrate above the MCL, and, importantly, these same people in the LUB are unaware of this fact - nor do they have access to any resources for treatment or alternative sources of drinking water.

I understand that we must follow the decisions and directions of these political leaders on this issue, but I will say that I think the position they appeared to stake out on this call represents a troubling path away from the protection of public health. I will admit that I do not understand what the intention of the region is now, as conveyed and directed by the political leaders; but, I am concerned that it appears the region has been directed to: 1) potentially delay or confuse the conclusions related to state actions to this point, or 2) abdicate its responsibility to work in earnest towards the protection of the health of those persons who are very likely, if not certainly, drinking and being exposed to water contaminated with nitrate above the MCL—and, who are, importantly, completely unaware of this fact.

While I am not necessarily recommending that

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Please note that I am writing this, in my capacity as Associate Regional Counsel for Region 10, as documentation for the record of the change in the direction and apparent limitation of public health protection tools directed at the region by the political leadership of the various headquarters offices (OW and OECA) present on the call today, even after hearing that the vast amount of data and follow-up meetings with the state agencies to substantiate these data, presents a potential, if not actual, threat to human health.

I am open to anyone's comments and/or edits to the statement above. Further, I am open to any guidance and/or clarification regarding the path outlined by David Ross, Anna W., and Susan B. on the call today because the region is now tasked with redrafting the letter to incorporate this new direction.

Thanks,
Clarke

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From: Contreras, Peter <Contreras.Peter@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2020 12:46 PM
To: King, Carol <King.Carol@epa.gov>; Martinson, Mathew <martinson.mathew@epa.gov>; Kenknight, Jeff <Kenknight.Jeff@epa.gov>; Thurmon, Clarke <Thurmon.Clarke@epa.gov>; Steiner-Riley, Cara <Steiner-Riley.Cara@epa.gov>
Cc: Rausch, Heidi <Rausch.Heidi@epa.gov>; Wilson, Dane <Wilson.Dane@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Lower Umatilla

Carol: we'll set up a time to debrief on revisions to the letter (unless you get to it first).

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From: King, Carol <King.Carol@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2020 9:11 AM
To: Martinson, Mathew <martinson.mathew@epa.gov>; Contreras, Peter <Contreras.Peter@epa.gov>; Kenknight, Jeff <Kenknight.Jeff@epa.gov>; Thurmon, Clarke <Thurmon.Clarke@epa.gov>; Steiner-Riley, Cara <Steiner-Riley.Cara@epa.gov>
Cc: Rausch, Heidi <Rausch.Heidi@epa.gov>; Wilson, Dane <Wilson.Dane@epa.gov>
Subject: Lower Umatilla

Mat and Jeff it sounds like you two are lead for today's briefing. If so, can I give you guys a quick call to quickly relay some additional feedback I just got from OECA's AA?

Thanks,
Carol

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